



Symposium AGENDA

Research Symposium: Rural Schools, Community Well-Being, and Implications for Policy

**Tuesday, March 22, 2016
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. ET
The University at Albany, Albany, N.Y.**

9:00–9:30 a.m.	Registration
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Welcome and Overview Dr. Jerome Steele, Professor, Capital Area School Development Association (CASDA), University at Albany Dr. James Butterworth, Executive Director, CASDA Rebecca Carey, Deputy Director, REL Northeast & Islands Dr. Pam Buffington, NRDRA Facilitator, REL Northeast & Islands; Moderator
9:45–10:15 a.m.	Keynote Address Dr. Kai Schafft, Director, Center on Rural Education and Communities, and Associate Professor of Education, The Pennsylvania State University
10:15–10:45 a.m.	Facilitated Discussion Session Pam Buffington
10:45–11:00 a.m.	Keynote Address, Continued Kai Schafft
11:00–11:15 a.m.	Facilitated Discussion and Q&A Pam Buffington
11:15–11:30 a.m.	Wrap-Up and Next Steps Pam Buffington
11:30–11:45 a.m.	Break

11:45 a.m. – 12:25 p.m.	Breakout Session 1 <i>Why Rural Schools Matter</i> Dr. Mara Tieken <i>College-Ready Writers Program: Expanding Possibilities For College, Careers, and Community Well-Being</i> Linda Denstaedt, Chris Mazura, Dr. Christine Dawson, and Carol Forman-Pemberton <i>Community School and Afterschool Learning Opportunities for Rural Schools</i> David Little
12:25–1:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:15–1:55 p.m.	Breakout Session 2 <i>BARR: A Model Program to Support the Well-Being of Teachers and Students (i3)</i> Susan Savell and Dr. Maryann Corsello <i>Summer School Programs in Rural Areas</i> Bernadette Doykos <i>Pre-K Programs Across Settings: An Examination of Community Capacities to Serve Young Children</i> Dr. Hope Casto
1:55–2:00 p.m.	Transition
2:00–2:40 p.m.	Breakout Session 3 <i>Systems Thinking and Implementation Within the Rural Setting</i> Dr. Lynn Macan <i>UPSTART: A Technology-Delivered, Home-Based Kindergarten Preparedness Program</i> Dr. Claudia Miner <i>The Unique Cognitive and Academic Consequences of Rural Poverty</i> Michelle Tine
2:40–2:45 p.m.	Transition
2:45–3:20 p.m.	Small Group Work and Discussion
3:20–3:50 p.m.	Practitioner Panel with Keynote Speaker What have we learned?
3:50–4:00 p.m.	Wrap-Up and Adjourn

Breakout Sessions—Descriptions and Presenters

Session 1

Why Rural Schools Matter, Dr. Mara Tieken

This presentation will share the results of an ethnographic study that explores how rural schools shape and sustain rural communities, published in her book *Why Rural Schools Matter* (University of North Carolina Press). The study focuses on two rural Arkansas towns and their public schools, showing how these schools shape the racial dynamics of their surrounding towns and knit these groups of residents, whether single-race or cross-racial, into distinct, recognizable communities. The presentation will conclude by examining how growing state power—and current circumscriptions of a school’s purpose to academic achievement alone—undermine the potential of a rural school to sustain a community.

Dr. Mara Casey Tieken received her Doctorate of Education from the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University in 2011. Her research focuses on racial and educational equity in rural schools and communities. Her book *Why Rural Schools Matter* was published in 2014. She is now beginning a multi-year, ethnographic project that examines the factors shaping the college experiences—aspirations, transitions, and persistence—of rural, first-generation students; this project is funded by the Spencer Foundation. Before returning to graduate school, she taught third grade and adult basic education in rural Tennessee.

College-Ready Writers Program: Expanding Possibilities for College, Careers, and Community Well-Being,

Linda Denstaedt, Chris Mazura, Dr. Christine Dawson, and Carol Forman-Pemberton

National Writing Project educators, including a team from the Capital District Writing Project at the University at Albany—SUNY, will describe how the development of students’ argument writing through critical reading of nonfiction texts engages students as participants in important conversations and invites teachers into powerful collaborative practices. By looking at students’ own words, participants will imagine how this kind of teaching and learning might occur in rural schools and communities across the country.

Linda Denstaedt is on the Leadership Team of the National Writing Project’s College-Ready Writers Program. Chris Mazura is a teacher consultant with the Capital District Writing Project at SUNY—Albany. Dr. Christine Dawson is an assistant professor at Skidmore College. Carol Forman-Pemberton is co-director of the Capital District Writing Project at SUNY—Albany.

Community School and Afterschool Learning Opportunities for Rural Schools, David Little

This session will explore a new study released by the Statewide Learning Alliance, which counts the Rural Schools Association of New York as a member. The study includes recommendations for community school and after-school learning opportunities for rural schools.

David Little began serving as the executive director of the Rural Schools Association of New York State in November 2014. Prior to that, Dave served as director of governmental relations of the New York State School Boards Association for 15 years. Dave began his career in public service as legal counsel first in the State Assembly and then in the Senate, where he was home rule and counsel to the majority leader for local government. Dave has been a county legislator and regional planning commissioner, as well as serving as a school board president for a decade. Dave also served as national chair of the Conference of State Association Legislative Staff. Dave received his undergraduate education at Wittenberg University and his JD from the Capital University Law School.

Session 2

BARR: A Model Program to Support the Well-Being of Teachers and Students (i3), Susan Savell and Dr. Maryann Corsello

This session will present information about BARR (Building Assets Reducing Risks), the social-emotional education model, and how this model is impacting rural schools in Maine. BARR engages community supports to contribute to the social and academic success of all ninth grade students. Because this is a teacher teaming model, teachers discover new ways to collaborate, leading to greater job satisfaction.

Susan Savell is the co-director of the Investing in Innovation (i3) BARR Validation Project, as well as director of the Center for Positive Youth Development at Spurwink Services in Maine. Dr. Maryann Corsello, professor emeritus at the University of New England, is the evaluation director for the BARR Center.

Summer School Programs in Rural Areas, Bernadette Doykos

Over the last three decades, research has emerged suggesting that summer programs may curb summer learning loss, especially for students from low-income families. However, the majority of research has focused on high-density, urban areas. With this study we seek to address this gap by drawing from data from case studies across Maine. Our analyses focus on the specific barriers and facilitators to program development, participation, and overall success from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders from school districts, including superintendents, principals, and program personnel. The session will conclude with a dialogue about how to mobilize resources and support across all levels to bolster the development and success of such programs in non-urban regions.

Bernadette Doykos is a research associate at the Center for Education Policy, Applied Research, and Evaluation (CEPARE), where she works on a number of projects focusing primarily on issues of expanding educational quality and access. She brings over a decade of experience in the field of educational research and evaluation. She also served as a co-editor for the recently published *Academics in Action! A Model for Community Engaged Research, Teaching, and Service* (Fordham University Press, 2015). She is a PhD candidate in community research and action at the Peabody College of Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt University.

Pre-K Programs Across Settings: An Examination of Community Capacities to Serve Young Children, Dr. Hope Casto

This session engages participants with a study about pre-k programs across settings and assesses the variation in capacity of communities to care for children from birth to age 5. A family's ability to prepare for schooling and return to the labor market by accessing childcare is affected by both their financial resources and their location. In addition, high-quality early educational experiences are beneficial for young children's cognitive, social, emotional, and even physical development. Using data from two state agencies and the US Census, the study findings are clear in that geography, location, wealth, and size are all related to the capacity of communities to provide state-registered care opportunities for families across New York state. Policy must respond to these inequities.

Dr. Hope G. Casto joined the Skidmore Education Department in 2010 from her doctoral program at Cornell University. Her dissertation, "School-Community Connections: Bridging the Institutional and Community Contexts," describes school-community partnerships in rural communities across New York state. Hope is committed to place-based education as an important link between school achievement and community development efforts. The study of place is a thread in Hope's work that began in her undergraduate work and continues today.

Session 3

Systems Thinking and Implementation Within the Rural Setting, Dr. Lynn Macan

This session will explore the development and sustaining of systems in rural schools and districts. Drawing from Michael Fullan's recent publication, *Coherence*, and others, Dr. Macan will examine aspects of leadership as well as strategic partnerships based upon analysis of data. Examples will be drawn from various projects/schools in rural settings in New York.

Dr. Lynn Macan is a visiting assistant professor at the University at Albany—SUNY. She served as superintendent in a rural district along with such roles as assistant superintendent for instruction, principal, assistant principal, and supervisor of student and community services in rural, urban, and suburban districts. She is currently doing collaborative work, including facilitating instructional rounds, and coaching administrators.

UPSTART: A Technology-Delivered, Home-Based Kindergarten Preparedness Program, Dr. Claudia Miner

Learn about this home-based, technology-delivered kindergarten-readiness program that can be used as a stand-alone or as a complement to site-based preschool. UPSTART—the winner of an i3 Validation Grant—has learned how to successfully partner with and support parents to get children ready for school and has six years of positive learning results data, including an external evaluation.

Dr. Claudia Miner is vice president of development and executive director of the UPSTART program at the Utah-based nonprofit Waterford Research Institute. Under her direction, UPSTART has reached more than 20,000 Utah pre-kindergarteners and has expanded to South Carolina, Idaho, and California. Miner received an i3 Validation Grant in 2013 to focus the program in Utah's 18 most rural school districts. She received her undergraduate degree from Colgate University, her Master's degree from the College of William and Mary, and her PhD from Washington State University.

The Unique Cognitive and Academic Consequences of Rural Poverty, Dr. Michelle Tine

Abundant research documents differences in the academic achievement and cognitive processing of students from low- versus high-income homes. But research samples are almost exclusively drawn from urban areas. Inadvertently, urban findings are generalized to both urban and rural populations. To address this issue, Dr. Tine conducted a set of studies to 1) document the unique cognitive processing abilities of students from low-income rural, low-income urban, high-income rural, and high-income urban developmental contexts, 2) determine the relationship between their cognitive processing and academic achievement, and 3) determine if there are aspects of the ecological contexts (i.e., home, classroom) of rural and urban poverty that predict cognitive processing and/or academic achievement. Results suggest low-income rural students exhibit distinct patterns from low-income urban students. The low-income rural students have lower inhibition scores and, unlike the other three developmental groups, inhibition does not account for a significant portion of variance in their academic achievement scores. Preliminary analyses reveal that specific home-level variables may play a role in the cognitive processing differences.

Dr. Michele Tine is an assistant professor in the Education Department at Dartmouth College and principal investigator of the Poverty and Learning Lab. She conducts lab- and school-based research to establish the unique cognitive and educational needs of students growing up in rural versus urban poverty. Her research has received local and national press and has been honored by the National Rural Education Association; PDK International named her an Emerging Leader in education.